



By Jane McBride Choate

(Based on a true story)

“When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God” (Mosiah 2:17).

It was early when Tayson rolled out of bed and put on old work clothes. He and Dad hurried and ate breakfast, then pulled on boots and work gloves.

“Grab those shovels and put them in the car,” Dad told Tayson. “We’re going to need them.”

Last night Dad got a call from Brother Merkley in the ward. Some of the houses nearby had filled with mud from a big storm. The owners needed lots of help cleaning out their muddy basements.

“Can I go?” Tayson had asked.

“Sure,” Dad said. “It’s going to be hard work, but I think you can do it.”

Tayson grinned. He was excited to help Dad out.

When they got to the house, they saw other people from their stake. The stake president patted Tayson’s shoulder and said he was glad Tayson was there.

Tayson was glad too—until he looked down the

basement stairs. Squishy, wet mud piled halfway up the stairway! How would they ever get down there? Dad grabbed his shovel and plunged right into the mud. Tayson followed. He tried to step in Dad’s footprints, but the mud sucked the prints away before he could step into them.

“Can you start shoveling?” Brother Merkley asked Tayson’s dad. “And Tayson, maybe you can join the bucket brigade with me.”

Tayson followed Brother Merkley to the far end of the basement. Tayson got in line and passed a bucket full of mud to the person next to him. The last person in line lifted the bucket through the open window to someone outside. Then another bucket came down the line.

Tayson had never seen so many buckets in his whole life. And every one of them was full of mud. The line of buckets never seemed to end! Soon Tayson’s shoulders and arms got tired.

After working for several hours, everyone took a



break. Tayson stretched his aching shoulders.

“I think we’ve got it under control here,” Brother Merkle said. “But if anyone can stay longer, it would be great to help other neighbors.”

Tayson rubbed his arms. He wondered if he could ever lift another bucket. But still he climbed up the stairs and followed Dad across the muddy grass to a neighbor’s house. Once again Tayson passed dozens of heavy buckets filled with mud down the line and out the basement window. His arms and back felt sore and limp as spaghetti. But he didn’t quit.

When the basement was cleared of mud, the man who lived in the house shook everyone’s hands. “I can’t believe you folks turned out to help people you don’t even know. I can’t thank you enough.”

Tayson and Dad returned home covered in mud. Tayson felt like every muscle in his body was sore and tired. Even his eyelids!

“I’ve never been so dirty,” Tayson said. “Not even

when we went camping last summer. Do you think Mom will let us into the house?”

Dad looked down at his muddy shoes and burst out laughing. “I hope so. I don’t think we can go to church tomorrow looking like this!”

“I hurt all over, but I feel good at the same time,” Tayson said.

“That’s the good feeling that comes from helping someone else,” Dad said. “I’m proud of you.”

Tayson was wet and cold from the hard, damp work, but Dad’s words warmed him all the way down to his toes. ◆

The author lives in Colorado, USA.



I helped my dad put up walls in the barn.

Jacob D., age 9, Mississippi, USA

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